

REMARKS

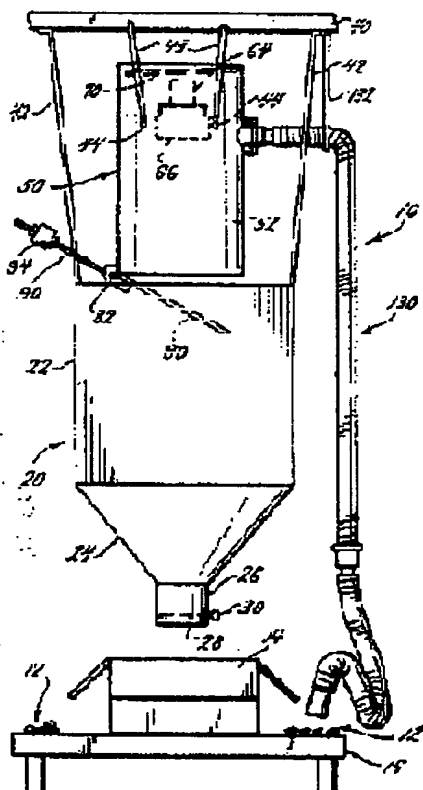
Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given the present application. The application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office action, and amended as necessary to more clearly and particularly describe the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

New claims 13-17 are presented for examination. Claims 1-12 have been cancelled.

The present invention is directed to a suction device operating at a comparatively low power, preferably used for collection of sample container closures. The suction device includes a suction passage, a reservoir in which a vacuum is selectively created, and a movable closure flap on the underside of the reservoir. With the reservoir empty and no vacuum yet created, the closure flap, by operation of a counterweight, stays in a closed position. When a vacuum is created within the reservoir (empty or holding container closures) the closure flap is also in a closed position. The vacuum creates a closing force which exceeds an opening force created by the weight of the container closures falling into and resting in the reservoir. When the vacuum is removed from the reservoir (the reservoir now holding one or more container closures) the weight of the container closures moves the closure flap to an open position. The operation of the closure flap of the present invention is an improvement over the prior art because actuation of movement of the closure flap is simplistic, created by either a counter weight (to a closed position) or the weight of container closures (to an open position) when no vacuum exists in the reservoir.

U.S. patent 4,947,903 to Beckwith (hereinafter Beckwith '903) discloses a loose material recovery apparatus. The apparatus includes a bin 20 and a vacuum assembly 50 located above the bin. At the base of the vacuum assembly 50 is a lower door 80 attached to a pivoting rod 90. A counterweight 94 is attached to the pivoting rod 90 at the end opposite the lower door 80. The counterweight 94 is adjustable along the threaded rod for ease in closing the door upon energizing the vacuum motor 64.

In operation, with the motor 64 deenergized, the door 80 falls by its own weight to an *open position* as shown in the figure below.



In order to close the door 80, the following steps must take place. First, the

vacuum motor 64 must be energized. Additionally, a spring and linkage system assists the motor to insure that the door closes. In another embodiment of Beckwith '903 a ball and line assembly is used to assist in closing the door when the motor is actuated. The ball is drawn upwardly and the line pulls the door closed.

U.S. patent 3,824,745 to Hutchins (hereinafter Hutchins '745) discloses a suction system for an abrading tool that utilizes a centrifugal blower.

With regard to independent claim 13, a system is claimed that is different than that described in Beckwith '903 and much more simplistic. The flap of the claimed invention simply is closed by a counterweight and opened by the weight of container closures in a reservoir when a vacuum is not present in the container. Beckwith '903 discloses a different apparatus that operates in an opposite manner (door open when vacuum is not actuated) and only discloses complex systems requiring mechanisms in addition to the vacuum to close the door. The simple system of claim 13 is not disclosed by Beckwith '903. Specifically, the counterweight of Beckwith '903 is not disclosed as being adjustable to position the door in a closed position when not vacuum or other closure mechanism is in operation. Hutchins '745 does nothing to cure these deficiencies. Consideration of new claim 13 is requested.

Claims 14-17 depend directly or indirectly from claim 13 and are believed to be patentable for the reasons stated above.

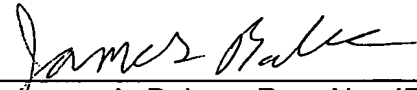
In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in a condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney to expedite

prosecution of the present application.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 18-0160, our Order No. SCH-12597.

Respectfully submitted,

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